

Kindly replace all the claims now pending with the following claims:

1.(currently amended) An encoded symbology scanner for simultaneously scanning encoded symbology from a number of articles upon which symbology has been encoded, comprising{;} :

(a) support means for the scanner for receiving one or more articles upon which symbology has been encoded;

(b) illumination means disposed to simultaneously illuminate all of the encoded symbology carried by all articles that are together upon said support means;

A¹ (c) [imageing] imaging means disposed to simultaneously image all of the encoded symbology when received together by said support means; and

(d) decoding means for decoding the encoded symbology images.

2.(currently amended) The encoded symbology scanner of claim 1, wherein{;} :

(a) said support means includes transparent window means disposed to simultaneously receive a plurality of symbology encoded articles so that the encoded symbology may be disposed upon said window means and for illumination by said illumination means; and

(b) said imaging means includes a CCD camera means disposed and lensed to simultaneously capture an image of all of the encoded symbology.

3.(currently amended) The encoded symbology scanner of claim 2, wherein{;} :

(a) said imaging means includes a plurality of said CCD camera means simultaneously operated but with each said CCD camera means disposed to capture only a portion of the encoded symbology;

(b) said decoding means functioning to decode the symbology for each of said portions and to assemble the so decoded symbology into a stream of decoded data.

4.(currently amended) The encoded symbology scanner of claim 3, wherein{;} : there are four CCD camera means each disposed to capture a quarter of the encoded symbology.

5.(currently amended) The encoded symbology scanner of claim 4, wherein[:] : the encoded symbology is different for each article with encoded symbology.

6.(currently amended) The encoded symbology scanner of claim 5, wherein[:] : the articles to be encoded are test tubes or vials disposed in a predetermined array in a rack means.

Q¹ 7.(currently amended) An encoded symbology scanner for [simultaneously] simultaneously scanning encoded symbology from a number of articles upon which symbology has been encoded, comprising[:] :

(a) a support for the scanner for receiving one or more articles upon which symbology has been encoded;

(b) an illumination assembly disposed to simultaneously illuminate all of the encoded symbology carried by all articles that are together upon said support;

(c) an [mageing] imaging device disposed to simultaneously image all of the encoded symbology when received together by said support; and

(d) a decoder for decoding the encoded symbology images.

8.(currently amended) The encoded symbology scanner of claim 7, wherein[:] :

(a) said support includes a transparent window disposed to simultaneously receive a plurality of symbology encoded articles so that the encoded symbology may be disposed upon said window and for illumination by said illumination assembly; and

(b) said imaging device includes a CCD camera disposed and lensed to [simultaneously] simultaneously capture an image of all of the encoded symbology.

9.(currently amended) The encoded symbology scanner of claim 8, wherein[:] :

(a) said imaging device includes a plurality of said CCD cameras simultaneously operated but with each said CCD camera disposed to capture only a portion of the encoded symbology;

(b) said decoder functioning to decode the symbology for each of said portions and to assemble the so decoded symbology into a stream of decoded data.

10.(currently amended) The encoded symbology scanner of claim 9, wherein[:] : there are four CCD cameras each disposed to capture a quarter of the encoded symbology.

11.(currently amended) The encoded symbology scanner of claim 10, wherein[:] : the encoded symbology is different for each article with encoded symbology.

12.(currently amended) The encoded symbology scanner of claim 11, wherein[:] : the articles to be encoded are test tubes or vials disposed in a predetermined array in a rack.

13.(currently amended) A process for scanning encoded symbology from a number of articles upon which symbology has been encoded, comprising[:] :

- (a) positioning a plurality of articles upon which symbology has been encoded for simultaneous decoding;
- (b) [simultaneously] simultaneously illuminating all of the encoded symbology for all of such articles;
- (c) [simultaneously] simultaneously imaging all of the encoded symbology so disposed; and
- (d) decoding the encoded symbology images.

14.(currently amended) The symbology scanning process of claim 13, including[:] :

- (a) providing and disposing a transparent [windor] window to simultaneously receive a plurality of symbology encoded articles; and
- (b) simultaneously imaging means all of the encoded symbology for the articles with a CCD camera disposed and lensed to simultaneously capture an image of all of the encoded symbology.

15.(currently amended) The symbology scanning process of claim 14₁ including[;] :

(a) employing a plurality of said CCD cameras to simultaneously image the encoded symbology but with each said CCD [cameras] camera disposed to capture only a portion of the encoded symbology;

(b) decoding the symbology for each of said portions and assembling the so decoded symbology into a stream of decoded data.

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A₁* 16.(currently amended) The symbology scanning process of claim 15₁ wherein[;] : there are four CCD cameras each disposed to capture a quarter of the encoded symbology.

17.(currently amended) The symbology scanning process of claim 16₁ wherein[;] : the encoded symbology is different for each article with encoded symbology.

18.(currently amended) The symbology [scann] process of claim 5₁ wherein[;] : the articles to be encoded are test tubes or vials and are disposed in a predetermined array in a rack.
